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## House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARPER).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
December 31, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GREGG HARPER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

### THE FISCAL CLIFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Congress is here on New Year's Eve with the people they love: themselves, the special interests, and the policies of the past.

The overhyped fiscal cliff may well be upon us, and we will find \$600 billion of deficit reduction with tax increases and spending cuts, and then there will be the howls that we are doing it too abruptly from some of the same people

who demanded this system of expiring cuts and sequestration in the first place.

Make no mistake. There will be some real damage. We will be squeezing some people who deserve far better, and then we'll be scrambling to refine the budget reductions in a way that makes sense. And some time in the hours, days, and weeks ahead, we will get a semibalanced small agreement, very likely, struggling throughout the new Congress with budget bluster, especially in the House, moving from crisis to deadline to showdown.

It's ironic because it doesn't need to be this hard. We could use the pressure and revenue from expiring temporary tax cuts to enact tax reform to provide the money that a growing and aging American population needs, but do it in a simpler, fairer way. We could actually reduce entitlement spending on Medicare by accelerating the health care reform, which is what, in Oregon, we've committed to do in exchange for some flexibility and some upfront funding. We have in place a program going forward that, if done on a national level, would save over \$1 trillion over the next 10 years.

We shouldn't be fooling around with patching an outmoded, unfair farm bill. Let's reform it to support family farmers and ranchers, beginning farmers, especially those who grow food, not large agribusiness producing heavily subsidized commodities. We can save money, protect the environment, enhance wildlife, the experience for hunters and fishermen, and have a healthier America.

The military is the greatest source of money. We can start with 135,000 soldiers scattered in over 1,000 bases across the globe. We have a nuclear arsenal where we are spending several hundred billion dollars on weapons we can't use, we don't need and can't afford.

Mr. Speaker, the good news is that the public would support us in these

steps. The good news is that, if we ever got the chance to consider them in a fair and open debate on the floor of the House, we would find bipartisan support for each of these real saving options. The good news is that, ultimately, we are going to take these steps, proving, once again, the wisdom of Winston Churchill when he observed that you could always count on the Americans to do the right thing after they have exhausted every other possibility.

### GOING OFF THE FISCAL CLIFF WITH POCKETS FULL OF SOMEONE ELSE'S MONEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, "We don't have a trillion-dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough; we have a trillion-dollar debt because we spend too much." That was Ronald Reagan in 1982.

President Reagan went on to lead America out of a recession, but history has a way of repeating itself. Somehow, Washington never gets the message, and here we are, 30 years later on the brink of another crisis on New Year's Eve, still addicted to spending money. Now we are over \$16 trillion in debt. President Reagan's words and principles remain true today, and they were true when he said them: the problem is spending money.

Mr. Speaker, the American people know this. Why doesn't the Federal Government and Congress understand it? Why? Because Washington is obsessed with spending someone else's money. It's the arrogance of power that Congress spends the people's money without regard to how this obsession affects those very people.

When American families are in debt, they sacrifice and they cut spending, whether that means taking one less

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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